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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Letter dated 6 March 2007 from the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and Moldova addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit the joint statement of the Permanent Missions of Georgia and Moldova to the United Nations (see annex). We should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 27.

(*Signed*) Irakli **Alasania**
Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Alexei **Tulbure**
Permanent Representative of Moldovato the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 6 March 2007 from the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Joint statement of the Permanent Missions of Georgia and Moldova to the United Nations

Regarding conflict in Transnistria, Moldova, the practice of using in the official communications by the State institutions of the Russian Federation of the "minister" or "president" titles for the Tiraspol regime representatives, also known as Russian Federation citizens, generates confusion and suspicion regarding the impartiality and constructive approach of this State, in its capacity of a mediator in the Transnistrian conflict settlement. Besides, attribution of such titles to the representative of a secessionist entity, existing out of the constitutional framework of the Republic of Moldova could be perceived as an indirect recognition of the legitimacy of this entity.

The same very practices we witness with regard to the separatist leaders of Sokhumi and Tskhinvali regimes in Georgia as well. Obviously, the use of such propagandistic methods, oriented to mislead public opinion and the international community, may not produce anything but mistrust and confusion; accordingly it should be more reasonable to renounce them.

A source of additional confusion is an unclear position of the Russian Federation towards different so-called "elections" and "independence referendums" conducted by the Tiraspol, Sokhumi and Tskhinvali regimes. Those acts run contrary to the standards and values of democracy, rule of law while being conducted in the regions where fundamental human rights and freedoms are subject to gross and mass violations, as reflected in the reports of various international organizations. They cannot claim to have any kind of legitimacy.

As a recent example, we could mention the holding of so-called local and parliamentary elections in Abkhazia, Georgi without the participation of the overwhelming majority of its local population, w ho were forcibly expelled from the region as a result of grave crime against humanity — ethnic cleansing, which was fixed in the final documents of the OSCE Budapest, Lisbon and Istanbul summits.

In this context, attempts to declare those activities of separatists being in line with democratic standards are hindering confidence-building and cause fading interest of Tiraspol, Sokhumi and Tskhinvali regimes to the negotiations. Even more, it is totally inadmissible, cynical and immoral to describe as democratic the Sokhumi regime that through ethnic cleansing forced the local population of over 300,000 Georgians, Ukrainians, Estonians, Greeks and Russians to leave their homes and denied them the right to native language instruction.

Herewith we still have to mention that the issue of massive process of granting Russian passports to the residents of separatist-controlled territories in Georgia and Moldova are directly fuelling escalation of overall situation in the conflict regions. With regard to Georgia, the continuous violation by the Russian Federation of international and bilateral obligations regarding cross-border movements and economic relations, particularly procrastination on the issue of legalization of the

currently illegally functioning border-checkpoints on the Russian-Georgian state border, are causing additional difficulties.

Remaining deeply concerned on the lack of real progress in the settlement process of the conflicts, we want to see the Russian side not welcoming so-called "presidents" and "ministers" in Moscow, but using its influence and leverages to bring separatist authorities in Moldova and Georgia to constructive approach, directed towards full-scaled resolution of conflicts, based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both countries.

We want to see the Russian Federation also implementing all remaining Istanbul commitments and completing the process of withdrawal of its forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

We express our concern on the continuous failure of the five-plus-two negotiations on Transnistria, Moldova to resume. Negotiations in this format have been suspended for more than a year due to the unwillingness of the separatist regime to come back to the negotiations. Unfortunately, this appears to be backed by the Russian side simply because we did not witness any efforts aimed at resuming the process.

Finally, we would like to underline that all actions of our countries, including in the United Nations General Assembly, are directed to being a support to the peace processes, deliver a clear and unambiguous position of the international community to the separatist regimes and avoid misleading, mixed messages to the leaders of those regimes, which cause significant impediments to the peaceful conflict-settlement. We once again underline our adherence to the peaceful resolution of the conflicts based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our States.